BRITISH COLUMBIA
The Best Place on Earth

ACHIEVEBC

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2007AE0035-000603
May 11, 2007

Ministry of Advanced Education
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

B.C. OPENS WORLD-CLASS SAFETY SIMULATION CENTRE

NEW WESTMINSTER – A state-of-the-art $3.2-million emergency simulation centre to train responders for disaster situations was officially opened today at the Justice Institute of B.C. by Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell and Minister of Public Safety John Les.

"JIBC is the only post-secondary institution in the world that uses the cutting-edge technology acquired from Scotland Yard and is one of 11 simulation centres internationally to offer this calibre of training," said Coell. "British Columbia has a world-class reputation for training emergency responders and that is in part because of programs like this."

Emergency responders are trained in the simulation lab by experiencing several scenarios where they make life-and-death decisions, and learn to communicate with other organizations that would also respond to the incident. The lab uses video clips, radio communication, and maps in a classroom environment to practice how to respond to realistic emergency situations like riots, collapsed buildings and chemical spills. The same software system was used in the response training for the 2000 and 2004 summer Olympic Games.

"The opening of this facility is timely given the recent focus on personal emergency planning, flood prevention and National Emergency Preparedness Week (May 6-12)," said Les. "Trained emergency personnel are key to protecting public safety, and this cutting-edge facility ensures B.C.'s responders continue to be recognized as the elite of emergency management worldwide."

The Province and JIBC partnered to build the 562-square-metre facility by providing $2.4 million and $850,000 respectively. JIBC has become a global leader in public safety education and training, and has grown from 2,000 students in 1978 to more than 30,000 today.

"The investment in this facility will help ensure that emergency responders from a range of disciplines are prepared to mount multi-agency responses to critical incidents," said Jack McGee, JIBC president. "Our vision is that this facility will be North America's, if not the world's, most comprehensive facility for education, training and applied research in the integrated response and management of critical incidents."

-more-

Since 2001, JIBC has received over $6.4 million in capital funding for projects. The Province has provided more than $1 billion in new funding for capital projects on campuses across B.C., and has allocated $700 million more in capital funding over the next three years to support post-secondary education.

-30-

Media contact:

Corinna Filion
Ministry of Advanced Education
250 952-6400
250 812-7977 (cell)

Cindy Rose
Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
250 356-6961

For more information on government services or to subscribe to the Province's news feeds using RSS, visit the Province's website at www.gov.bc.ca.